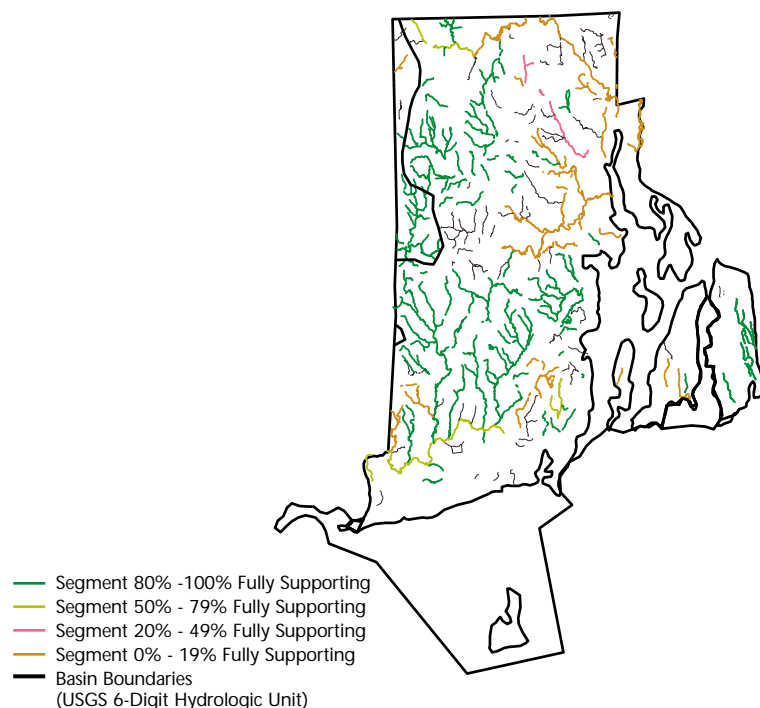


Rhode Island



This map depicts aquatic life use support status.

For a copy of the Rhode Island 1998 305(b) report, contact:

Connie Carey
 Rhode Island Department of
 Environmental Management
 Office of Water Resources
 235 Promenade Street
 Providence, RI 02908
 (401) 222-3961

Surface Water Quality

Of the river miles assessed, 52% fully support swimming use, and approximately 37% fully support it now but are considered threatened. Approximately 23% fully support aquatic life use and 50% are considered fully supporting but threatened. The most significant causes of non-support for rivers are biodiversity impacts, pathogens, metals, and nutrients. Potential sources of non-support include both point and nonpoint sources.

Of the lake acres assessed, 70% fully support swimming while 23% are considered fully supporting but threatened. Approximately 43% fully support aquatic life needs and 43% fully support aquatic life uses but are

threatened. For lakes and ponds, the major causes of nonsupport are high bacteria, nutrient, and chloride levels. Major sources of nonsupport are mainly from nonpoint source impacts such as urban and stormwater runoff.

In estuarine waters, approximately 77% support swimming uses and 14% fully support them but are considered threatened. Sixty-six percent fully support aquatic life needs while 18% are considered fully supporting but threatened. Seventy-three percent fully support shellfishing use while 6% fully support it but are considered threatened by bacterial contamination, the major impact on designated uses. Nutrients and low dissolved oxygen in the Upper Bay and coves are moderate causes of impairment. Combined sewer overflows are the major source of bacteria contamination. CSOs, urban runoff, and municipal discharges are sources of nutrient enrichment problems in the Upper Bay and coves.

Rhode Island did not report on the condition of wetlands.

Ground Water Quality

About 19% of the state's population gets its drinking water from public and private wells. Overall, Rhode Island's ground water has good to excellent quality, but over 100 contaminants have been detected in localized areas. Thirteen community and eight noncommunity wells have been closed, and over 350 private wells have had contaminant concentrations exceeding drinking water standards. The most common pollutants are petroleum products, certain organic solvents, and nitrates. Significant pollution sources include leaking underground storage tanks, hazardous and industrial waste disposal sites, illegal or improper waste disposal, chemical and oil spills, landfills, septic systems, road salt storage and application, and fertilizer application.

Programs to Restore Water Quality

The focus on water quality has gradually shifted from controlling point sources to controlling nonpoint sources of pollution. Construction of wastewater treatment systems has addressed the majority of the larger direct discharges to the state's waters. As part of the Watershed Approach, the Office of Water Resources (OWR) staff work with local property owners and officials to develop management plans and strategies to identify pollution sources and are involved with the oversight and performance evaluation of special water quality projects.

Programs to Assess Water Quality

The OWR surface water monitoring system gathers baseline data used in establishing and reviewing the state's water quality standards to measure progress and to supply information for use in development of permit limits for wastewater discharges and total maximum daily loads. The OWR performs bacteriological monitoring at selected state-owned beaches and provides intensive bacteriological monitoring of shellfishable waters. EPA protocols and USGS monitoring are included in Rhode Island's monitoring programs, as are many citizen monitoring groups, which supply supplemental water quality data for numerous rivers, lakes, ponds, and estuarine waters in the state.

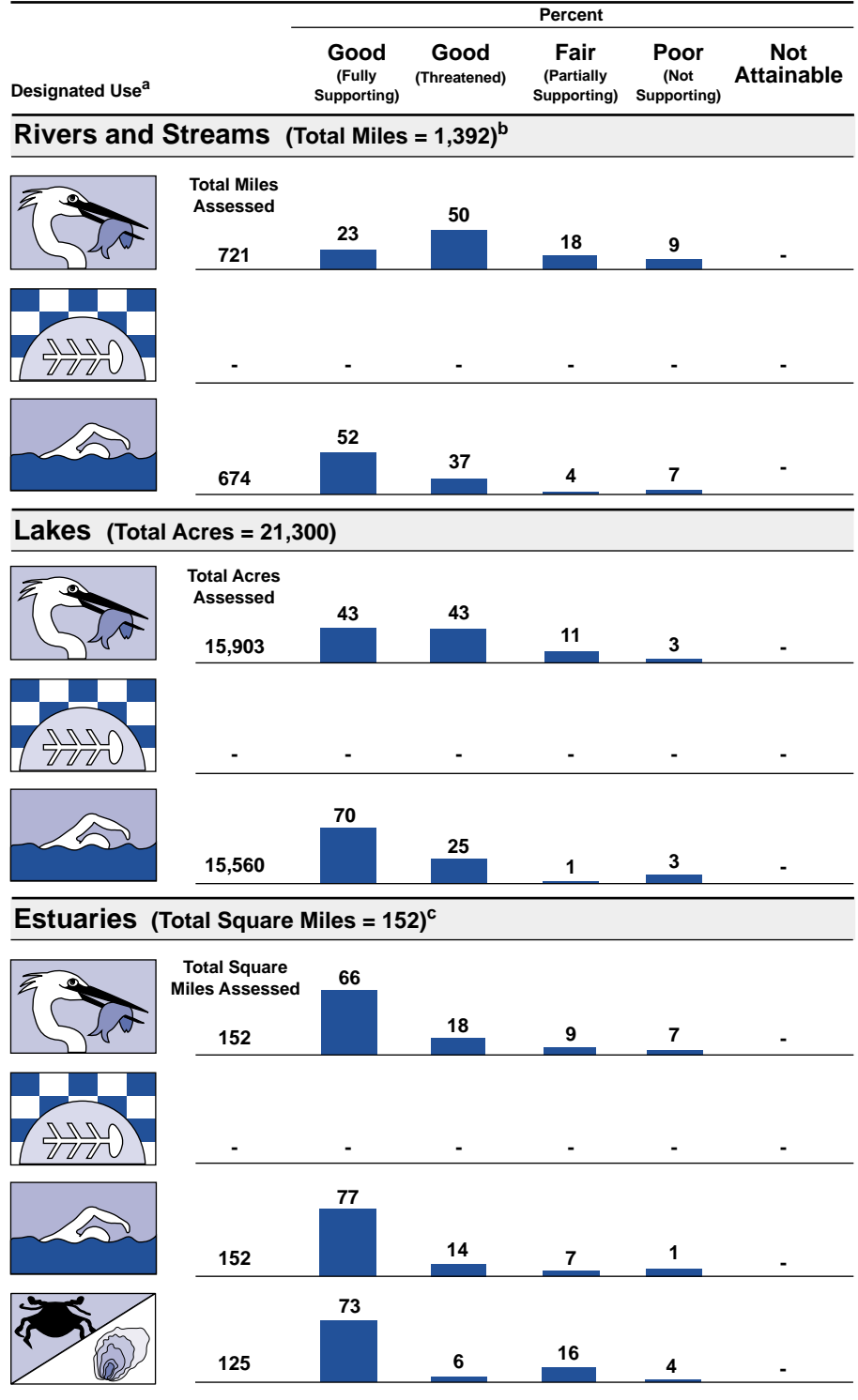
– Not reported in a quantifiable format or unknown.

^a A subset of Rhode Island's designated uses appear in this figure. Refer to the state's 305(b) report for a full description of the state's uses.

^b Includes nonperennial streams that dry up and do not flow all year.

^c Includes ocean waters.

Individual Use Support in Rhode Island



Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.